

Published and Copyright (c) 1999 - 2005  
All Rights Reserved

Atari Online News, Etc.  
A-ONE Online Magazine  
Dana P. Jacobson, Publisher/Managing Editor  
Joseph Mirando, Managing Editor  
Rob Mahlert, Associate Editor

Atari Online News, Etc. Staff

Dana P. Jacobson -- Editor  
Joe Mirando -- "People Are Talking"  
Michael Burkley -- "Unabashed Atariophile"  
Albert Dayes -- "CC: Classic Chips"  
Rob Mahlert -- Web site  
Thomas J. Andrews -- "Keeper of the Flame"

With Contributions by:

To subscribe to A-ONE, change e-mail addresses, or unsubscribe,  
log on to our website at: [www.atarinews.org](http://www.atarinews.org)  
and click on "Subscriptions".  
OR subscribe to A-ONE by sending a message to: [dpj@atarinews.org](mailto:dpj@atarinews.org)  
and your address will be added to the distribution list.  
To unsubscribe from A-ONE, send the following: Unsubscribe A-ONE  
Please make sure that you include the same address that you used to  
subscribe from.

To download A-ONE, set your browser bookmarks to one of the  
following sites:

<http://people.delphiforums.com/dpj/a-one.htm>  
<http://www.icwhen.com/aone/>  
<http://almag.atari.org>  
Now available:  
<http://www.atarinews.org>

Visit the Atari Advantage Forum on Delphi!  
<http://forums.delphiforums.com/atari/>

=~==~==

~ Web PSP Update A Fake! ~ Verizon Spam Policy! ~ MS' Outlook Live!  
~ M.U.L.E. Fans Unite! ~ P2P Operators Nabbed! ~ Web Video Ads Hot!

-\* Worm Exploits Tsunami Event! \*-  
-\* Tsunami Phishing Scammer Discovered \*-  
-\* X-Rated E-mail, Web Porn Is Not the Same! \*-

=~==~==

->From the Editor's Keyboard  
"~~~~~"

"Saying it like it is!"

Thankfully, this week is over. I can't believe that it's been another week from you-know-where! Not only has the weather really been downright outrageous (yes, I realize we're in the middle of a New England winter!), but work has been extraordinarily out of character (is that possible?). A winter "heat wave" last week, and arctic temperatures and snow this week. And now there's a major blizzard heading our way as I'm sitting here putting the finishing touches on this week's issue! Even the dogs - who normally are thrilled to frolic outside - didn't want to spend much time outdoors! And work! Ever try to plan your work day and, no matter what you've planned, everything goes awry? All week? I have a number of projects that need to be completed. Now, I usually attempt to plan for a number of distractions throughout the day - being part of a management team, it's to be expected. But last-minute meeting invites (mandatory), employee-relations issues, and a number of other issues kept cropping up all week. Needless to say, the projects are nowhere near completion, and headaches will continue into next week. Something to look forward to, I guess.

Needless to say, I really wasn't too motivated to do some more research of our archives. I know, I know, I've been talking about this for awhile now. But, it's been a chore just to find a way to unwind this past week. I haven't really got much accomplished around here the past couple of weeks. But, I did promise, and I will get to the bottom of the history that I've mentioned. It'll be enjoyable to bring back some of those memories.

Until next time...

=~==~==

Are There Any M.U.L.E. Fans Out There?

I am sure that a lot of you Atari users once had an Atari 8-Bit computer back in the day. Maybe you still do. You might remember a classic game called M.U.L.E. A game that you wish would have been ported over to the PC but never was.

If you are a M.U.L.E. fan like I am, you probably used to have hordes of

your friends over your house to play the best 4-man multi-player game ever written! After playing this game for hours upon hours, days upon days, years upon years, finally everyone grew up or grew apart and stopped getting together to play.

If you are a M.U.L.E. fan like I am, you probably have done a bit of M.U.L.E. re-researching on the internet, in hopes for one day someone to create an internet capable version of this great classic.

Well, I have some very good news for you. If you run Windows (98/XP) operating system, THE WAIT IS OVER!!!

Thanks to the authors of the Atari800WinPlus ([http://atariarea.histeria.pl/PLus/index\\_us.htm](http://atariarea.histeria.pl/PLus/index_us.htm)) and Kaillera ([www.kaillera.com](http://www.kaillera.com)), you can now play the greatest multiplayer game ever made with 4 players OVER THE INTERNET! This is not a clone, it is the ORIGINAL M.U.L.E. un-modified! Same graphics, same sound, same game! The only difference is that it looks a lot better on your computer than it did on your TV back in the day!

If this interests you, please hop on over to <http://atarimule.neotechgaming.com> where M.U.L.E. fans from around the world have been gathering and playing online!

Some of our members include the authors of the most popular M.U.L.E. web sites such as World of Mule (<http://www.worldofmule.net/index.htm>) and Extreme MULEing (<http://mule.eichberger.net/index.php>) and M.U.L.E. Fans (<http://www.100hosting.com/mule/>). Even the creator of the recent M.U.L.E. clone game Space HoRSE ([www.gilligames.com](http://www.gilligames.com)) has joined up with us!

Ahh, the feeling of playing with 4 human players again is quite exhilarating! SO, what are you waiting for? Join us now!!  
<http://atarimule.neotechgaming.com>.

See you there!

=~::~~::~=

PEOPLE ARE TALKING  
compiled by Joe Mirando  
[joe@atarinews.org](mailto:joe@atarinews.org)

Hidi ho friends and neighbors. Another week has come and gone, and again I find myself searching through NewsGroup posts.

I'll warn you right now: it's mighty slim pickin's this week. It seems that everyone was getting ready for the presidential inauguration or something.

Anyway, we'll take a look at the messages that are there and kick 'em around a little bit. But before we do that, I want to take a moment to say how cool it is that we're now in our seventh year here at A-ONE. It sure doesn't seem like it to me. I can still remember the day that Dana and I decided that we should strike out on our own. It seems like

yesterday.

Speaking of yesterday, it was pretty darned cold here in the northeast yesterday. I'm not talking take-a-walk-in-your-underwear-on-Titan cold, but... well, you get the idea.

Am I the only one who thinks it's incredibly cool that we landed a probe on Titan? It's... what? 2.2 BILLION miles away? Think about it... a place so far away that it takes even light more than three hours to get from there to here! Of course, that depends on whether or not I did the math correctly.

Now back to that "cold" thing... The temperature on Titan is something like -292 degrees Fahrenheit. Now THAT'S cold. Even folks in Chicago can't complain too much after that, huh?

I've always been a science/space buff, so I tend to relate things to current 'moon missions' or 'mars missions' or whatever happened to be going on at the time. At one time I could tell you almost anything you might want to know about the Voyager probes, the Viking landers, Clementine or Venera. But you know what happens as you get older. They say that the memory is the SECOND thing to go... and I can't remember what the first is!

Well, let's get on with the news and stuff from the UseNet.

From the comp.sys.atari.st NewsGroup  
=====

Coda asks about mail systems to run on an Atari with MiNT:

"Ok, I got SMAIL running (sort of) how about a POP3 server? Is there one for MiNT?"

Adam Klobukowski tells Coda:

"popa3d should not be hard to compile."

Coda asks Adam:

"Hmm. Which distribution would I get the src from? Debian?"

Adam tells Coda to...

"Search for project homepage on freshmeat.net"

Coda replies:

"I've downloaded the sources now so I'll try making it shortly. Can you think of anything I might need to know to successfully port this? Or is there a sparemint page somewhere with porting tips?"

Adam tells Coda:

"You may need some libraries, but this will come out while doing ./configure, I cannot predict it.

If you encounter linking problems, you may need to add -lsocket to linker flags."

Coda messes around and then tells Adam:

"I have built this and it works fine (at least by telnetting to localhost). Didn't need the -lsocket flag, just a bit of makefile editing thats all. BTW, do you know if MiNT uses either flock or fcntl (or both?) for file-locking, as this was a question in the config file."

Adam replies:

"If it compiles, it should work, as popa3d can use only library functions (provided by mintlib) and if mintlib provides something - it should work. If still uncertain ask on mintlist."

Jo Even Skarstein asks for info about using a KVM switch with a Milan:

"I'm trying to use an electronic keyboard/mouse/video switch to share the monitor, mouse and keyboard with a PC. The problem is that the Milan won't boot when I connect it to this switch, as my Milan won't boot without a connected keyboard and it apparently doesn't regard this switch as a keyboard... Has anybody used a Milan with an electronic keyboard switch? If so, what kind/model was that switch?"

Michael Schwingen tells Jo Even:

"I am quite sure that I have used my Milan with my Hetec V-Switch and it just worked - if the switch is of the electronic kind that always simulates a working mouse and keyboard to every attached PC, it should definitely work.

The Milan TOS uses only basic keyboard functionality to detect and initialize the keyboard.

The only possible trouble would be that a mouse wheel might not be detected when a KVM switch is used that does not support the wheel properly."

Mark Bedingfield asks Jo Even:

"Have you tried just selecting the KVM before turning the unit on?"

Jo Even replies:

"Yes, tried that. Even tried hacking the KVM to accept an external power supply on case it drains too much power from the Milan's keyboard/mouse connectors."

"The electronic KVM boxes are designed to simulate the signals a PS2 KB and Mouse produces. So either one of two things is happening, the cables are too long. Or the Controller on the Milan is not happy with the signals supplied. Probably the latter, although from memory the ST and Falcon do not like long cables.

Mario Koezema asks about where to find PD and Shareware software:

'Dan' tells Mario:

<http://www-ftp.lip6.fr/pub/atari>

<http://www.umich.edu/~archive/atari>

```
ftp://chapelie.rma.ac.be/atari/ "
```

Tune in again next week, same time, same station, and be ready to listen to what they are saying when...

$$= \sim = \sim = \sim =$$
$$= \sim = \sim = \sim =$$

->A-ONE's Game Console Industry News - The Latest Gaming News!

## Sony Warns Against PSP Update

Sony Computer Entertainment has cautioned users of its recently-launched PlayStation Portable (PSP) against installing a software file currently available on some enthusiast Web sites. The file at first glance appears to add several new features to the handheld gaming device when installed but the result is quite different.

"We have become aware that there is a software program going around on some Web sites and Internet bulletin boards claiming to be an update file that rewrites the system software of the PSP hardware," says Nanako Kato, a spokesperson for Sony in Tokyo.

"This software has not been issued officially by [Sony] and does not function properly. We advise our users not to execute or apply the program as it will cause the PSP hardware to stop operating," she says.

The file appeared last week and was obtained from a Sony server, according to enthusiast Web sites that first reported its existence. Screenshots of the file installation process show it promises to add functions such as an e-mail client, Web browser, voice chat, a calculator, text to speech reading, a word processor and/or spreadsheet, scheduler, and the ability to work with the SonicStage digital music software.

Kato confirms the file was created by Sony engineers and was produced for developers but says it contains dummy data. "It is not supposed to be used at this time," she says.

Users who have applied the file can get their PSP repaired by returning it to Sony. However, the company will charge for the repair service.

Sony launched the PSP in Japan on December 12 to long lines and strong demand. The company sold around 200,000 units - the entire amount initially sent to shops - on its first day on sale and demand has remained strong.

As of January 9, sales of the PSP in Japan totaled 544,304 units, according to Media Create, which gathers sales data from retailers. Shortages have eased since launch and on Sunday a unit could be purchased with no problems at both of two retailers visited in Tokyo.

Sony is planning to launch the PSP in the U.S. and Europe before the end of March this year.

~~~~~

A-ONE's Headline News  
The Latest in Computer Technology News  
Compiled by: Dana P. Jacobson

Computer Worm Exploits Tsunami to Spread Virus

A mass e-mail posing as a plea for aid to help the victims of last month's

Asian tsunami disaster is actually a vehicle for spreading a computer virus, Web security firm Sophos said Monday.

The worm appears with the subject line: "Tsunami donation! Please help!" and invites recipients to open an attachment called "tsunami.exe" - which, if opened, will forward the virus to other Internet users.

It could also initiate a denial-of-service attack against a German hacking Web Site, Sophos said, in which the site's server would be bombarded with messages, putting it out of action.

"Duping innocent users into believing that they may be helping the tsunami disaster aid efforts shows hackers stooping to a new low," Sophos senior technology consultant Graham Cluley said in a statement.

Sophos added that it had so far only received a small number of reports of the worm, which it said was not the first to try to take advantage of the Indian Ocean catastrophe in order to spread.

Another worm earlier this month propagated the message that the tsunami was God's revenge on "people who did bad on earth."

And there have been a number of mass emails sent out in an attempt to steal money, many of them versions of the so-called Nigerian Letter scam, to which readers are invited to reply with their details, apparently in order to help transfer large sums of money and receive a cut themselves.

One appears to be from a wealthy Thai merchant suffering from a fatal disease who has lost his family in the tsunami disaster and needs someone to collect millions of U.S. dollars from a European security firm to distribute it to charities.

"I need a God-fearing and trustworthy person that will be able to travel to Europe, to collect this deposit from the security company," the mail reads.

Sophos recommends recipients delete the mails and do not open the attachments.

#### Man Admits to Tsunami Phishing Scam

A Pennsylvanian man has admitted sending more than 800,000 e-mails purporting to be from a charity appealing for funds for victims of the Asian tsunami-funds that would instead have ended up in his PayPal account.

According to court documents, Matthew Schneider, a 24-year old unemployed painter from Pittsburgh, admitted sending the e-mails that claimed to be from international aid group Mercy Corps. Schneider claimed he intended to use the money to pay off debts and repair a car, but would have passed some of the money on to legitimate charities. However, when arrested, his PayPal account contained only \$150 in donations.

Schneider, the first American to be arrested in connection with a tsunami scam, was charged with fraud and released on bail of \$25,000. He is due back in court for a preliminary hearing next week.

One of the worst natural disasters of the past 100 years, the tsunami has spawned a commensurately large number of e-mail scams, with e-mail



specialist MessageLabs estimating that there are currently more than 100 such scams in circulation. The scams range from those, like Schmeider's, that purport to be from aid agencies seeking donations to variants of the infamous "Nigerian 419" e-mail, claiming to be from a survivor seeking to move money out of the region.

According to anti-virus company Sophos, the tsunami has also attracted the attention of virus writers, with a mass-mailing worm-dubbed W32/VBSun-sent out claiming to be information about donating to the relief effort.

Graham Cluley, senior technology consultant at Sophos, described the worm as "a new low."

"This gruesome insensitivity is a despicable ploy to get curious computer users to run malicious code on their computers," he said. "Everyone should be wary of unsolicited e-mail attachments and visit the established charity Web sites instead if they wish to assist those suffering as a result of the disaster."

Another worm, VBS/Geven-B, attempted to spread a message, calling the tsunami "God's avenger" [sic] on its victims.

#### Internet 'Phishing' Scams Getting More Devious

Internet "phishing" scams are becoming more difficult to detect as criminals develop new ways to trick consumers into revealing passwords, bank account numbers and other sensitive information, security experts say.

Scam artists posed as banks and other legitimate businesses in thousands of phishing attacks last year, sending out millions of "spam" e-mails with subject lines like "account update needed" that pointed to fraudulent Web sites.

These attacks now increasingly use worms and spyware to divert consumers to fraudulent sites without their knowledge, experts say.

"If you think of phishers initially as petty thieves, now they're more like an organized crime unit," said Paris Trudeau, senior product manager for Internet-security firm SurfControl.

Phishing attacks have reached 57 million U.S. adults and compromised at least 122 well-known brands so far, according to several estimates.

At the end of 2004 nearly half of these attacks contained some sort of spyware or other malicious code, Trudeau said.

One attack, first documented last month by the Danish security firm Secunia, misdirects Web surfers by modifying a little-known directory in Microsoft Windows machines called a host file. When an Internet user types a Web address into a browser, he is directed instead to a fraudulent site.

This technique has shown up in attacks spoofing several South American banks, said Scott Chasin, chief technical officer of the security firm MX Logic.

The convergence of all of these threats means "we can expect to see some large attacks in the near term," he said.

Another more ambitious attack targets the domain-name servers that serve as virtual telephone books, matching domain names with numerical addresses given to each computer on the Internet.

If one of those computers is compromised, Internet users who type in "www.bankofamerica.com" could be directed to a look-alike site run by identity thieves.

Domain-name servers are tougher to crack, as they are typically run by businesses rather than home users, but hackers can find a way in by posing as a company's tech-support department and asking new employees for their passwords, Trudeau said.

Domain-name hijacking is suspected in incidents involving Google.com, Amazon.com, eBay Germany and HSBC Bank of Brazil, Chasin said.

Even straightforward phishing attacks are getting more sophisticated. Spelling errors and mangled Web addresses made early scams easy to spot, but scam artists now commonly include legitimate-looking links within their Web addresses, said Kate Trower, associate product manager of protection software for EarthLink Inc.

Consumers who click on links like www.citibank.com in these messages are directed to a fraudulent Web address buried in the message's technical code, she said.

MasterCard International has caught at least 10 phishing scams involving www.mastercard.com over the past two months, said Sergio Pinon, senior vice president of security and risk services.

Consumers can protect themselves with software that screens out viruses, spyware and spam. But online businesses will have to take steps as well, perhaps by issuing customers a physical token containing a changing password, Chasin said.

Internet engineers should also figure out a way to authenticate Web addresses, much as they are currently figuring out how to make sure e-mail addresses are legitimate, he said.

#### P-to-P Operators Plead Guilty

Operators of two peer-to-peer services have pleaded guilty to felony criminal copyright infringement charges in the first U.S. federal convictions for copyright violations using P-to-P networks, the U.S. Department of Justice announced this week.

William R. Trowbridge of Johnson City, New York, and Michael Chicoine of San Antonio, Texas, each pleaded guilty to one count of conspiracy to commit felony criminal copyright infringement. The pleas were entered Tuesday in the U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia.

Trowbridge operated at P-to-P hub named Movie Room between August 2002 and August 2004, and Chicoine operated a P-to-P hub named Achenon's Alley TM, according to the DOJ. The two sites offered a wide variety of computer software, computer games, music, and movies in digital format, including some software titles that legitimately sell for thousands of dollars, the

DOJ says.

During an investigation, government agents downloaded 35 copyright works worth \$4820.66 from Chicoine's site and more than 70 copyright works worth \$20,648.63 from Trowbridge's site, the DOJ says. Both men pleaded guilty to acting for commercial advantage or private financial gain - the DOJ accused the two of operating their sites with the intent of obtaining copyrighted works from others.

"Those who steal copyrighted material will be caught, even when they use the tools of technology to commit their crimes," U.S. Attorney General John Ashcroft says in a statement. "The theft of intellectual property victimizes not only its owners and their employees, but also the American people, who shoulder the burden of increased costs for goods and services."

The convictions came after a joint investigation dubbed Operation Digital Gridlock, conducted by the DOJ's Computer Crime and Intellectual Property Section, the U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation and the U.S. Attorney's Office for the District of Columbia. The operation, announced in August 2004, targeted file-sharing of copyright materials over five P-to-P networks that belonged to an online group of hubs known as The Underground Network.

Member sites required their users to share large quantities of computer files with other users, according to the DOJ.

An e-mail to The Underground Network wasn't immediately returned Wednesday, but the group has posted comments about the U.S. government's P-to-P efforts on its Web site.

"Peer-to-peer (P2P) technology is engaged in a constant battle with those who fear change and innovation," The Underground Network says on its site. "The United States Government has recently joined the wrong side of this fight. (The large corporations, who fear losing control, have lined the pockets of the lawmakers.) The civil liberties of every person are at stake when organizations such as the (music and movie industries) rage battles against the very customers that support them."

The maximum penalties for a first-time offender convicted of conspiracy to commit felony criminal copyright infringement are five years in prison, a fine of \$250,000, restitution to the victims, and the forfeiture and destruction of infringing copies and all equipment used to manufacture infringing copies. The defendants are scheduled to be sentenced on April 29.

#### Grokster Gets a Date With Supreme Court

The U.S. Supreme Court has set March 29 as the date for oral arguments on whether companies providing peer-to-peer file-trading software should be held responsible for copyright infringement committed by users of their products.

The arguments are part of a long-playing case pitting a cadre of entertainment industry players against distributors of the Grokster and Morpheus file trading software.

The P-to-P companies have already won in district court, and declared

victory again last August when the 9th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals ruled that Grokster, Morpheus distributor StreamCast Networks, and a site operated by StreamCast called Musiccity.com were not liable for copyright violations by their users.

The entertainment companies, led by the Recording Industry Association of America and the Motion Picture Association of America, decided to appeal the case to the U.S. Supreme Court, saying there are seminal issues at stake.

The lower court rulings were largely based on the landmark 1984 "Sony Betamax" case between Sony and Universal City Studios. In that case the Supreme Court decided that Sony was not responsible for copyright violations committed by users of its Betamax video recorders, noting that the technology had significant noninfringing uses.

Now the Supreme Court looks set to revisit many of the arguments discussed in the Sony Betamax case. The Electronic Frontier Foundation, which is helping defend StreamCast, said this week that it looks forward to the Supreme Court reaffirming the Betamax ruling. It added that like Betamax, Morpheus has substantial noninfringing users.

Grokster is also standing by the Betamax defense. In a statement posted on its Web site the company said that any change to the Betamax ruling would serve to kill a revolutionary technology in its cradle.

The Supreme Court is expected to issue an opinion on the case by the end of July, according to the Electronic Frontier Foundation.

#### X-Rated E-mail, Web Porn Not the Same Thing

Many in the Internet industry have claimed that the federal CAN-SPAM (Controlling the Assault of Non-Solicited Pornography and Marketing) Act of 2003 has had little impact on the onslaught of ads for impotence drugs, make-money-fast schemes, and less savory content and services.

But the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) has begun using the legislation to go after some of the most notorious spammers - advertisers for pornography sites.

The FTC has won an extension to a January 5th injunction against six companies that will prevent them from advertising pornographic content through e-mails until the lawsuit comes to completion. Among the violations committed by the companies, claims the FTC, is the fact that their e-mails do not have the required "Sexually Explicit" tag included in the subject line.

The six companies involved are Global Net Solutions, Open Space Enterprises, Southlake Group, WTFRC (doing business as Reflected Networks), Global Net Ventures and Wedlake.

At issue is how to allow the free communication of information through the Internet without exposing children - or adults who object, for that matter - to inappropriate material. The fact that the predominant user base of the Internet skews toward younger age groups is well-known, Yankee Group's Patrick Mahoney told NewsFactor. Internet service providers like AOL have worked very hard to establish parental controls through which

adults can filter what children can access on Internet sites.

But what good are those filters when pornographic text and images are being delivered directly to e-mail inboxes? And children are not the only concern. Most Internet users know well the experience of skimming quietly through their mail in the morning only to be confronted with content whose tastelessness seems to know no limit.

Advocates of allowing pornography to proliferate freely on the Internet say that those who do not wish to view it simply should not visit the sites. But the recent explosion of e-mails advertising such sites gives users little choice.

The FTC injunction differentiates between the two methods of content delivery. The six companies involved can continue to operate their Web sites while the suit is in process. However, they are prohibited from sending any e-mails that advertise those sites while the matter is in process.

### Verizon's Spam Policy Criticized

For many online users, the idea that their Internet provider was particularly aggressive in cracking down on e-mail spam would be welcome news. But some of Verizon's 3 million high-speed Internet customers say the company is bungling the job and hurting their livelihoods.

Since mid-December, users have complained on Internet message boards and to Verizon customer service centers that they are not receiving legitimate inbound e-mail from Europe and Asia. Verizon, they say, has taken the unusual step of blocking nearly all mail from certain geographic areas because some networks in those regions are used by spammers.

"My business has been disrupted," said Gerson S. Sher, an independent consultant who works on projects fostering scientific cooperation between the United States and Russia. He said a contract he was negotiating was delayed by several weeks, and another key meeting failed to take place because correspondents could not get e-mail through to him.

Douglas Place, vice president of Verizon's data network services, said the company is not blocking entire regions, has not changed its policies and is merely doing what most Internet providers do: monitoring its own networks and blocking mail from other networks that Verizon deems to be conduits of large-scale spamming.

But that explanation does not satisfy Sher, who is especially angry because it has taken weeks and several phone calls to Verizon representatives to get even a rudimentary understanding of what is going on. On his first call, he said, a representative told him that Verizon, like all Internet providers, blocks mail from certain networks because they are known to carry spam and viruses borne by e-mail.

But Sher was told he merely needed to put any legitimate address from which he was expecting e-mail onto his "white list," which would keep e-mail from that source from being diverted into a spam folder.

It was bad advice, Verizon officials now acknowledge. When the company blocks certain senders from penetrating its main network, an individual's

white list has no effect.

Speculation that Verizon was blocking whole regions - a move that would set it apart from other Internet providers in the war on spam - was fanned in part by an Internet posting last month by a Verizon technical support employee who suggested it was now company policy, Place said.

"The Internet is a chatty community," Place said. "When that popped up, people said 'It must be this.' "

Place said the note was not official and that the technician no longer works there.

Place said some of the furor is possibly being fueled by spammers who want to be better able to reach Verizon users. Two of the complaints the company received, Place said, came from individuals known to be spammers.

Those explanations are met with a dubious eye by some technical experts.

"Every ISP is desperate to do something about spam," said John R. Levine, who until recently headed a working group developing technical standards for technology to combat spam. By some estimates, spam accounts for more than 70 percent of all e-mail traversing electronic networks, and spammers are adroit in evading barriers thrown up by users and Internet providers.

But Verizon, Levine said, has been known for anti-spam efforts that were "fabulously not thought through."

Levine, who is not a Verizon customer but has talked to many others who are, said he suspects Verizon decided to block mail from all ISPs in certain areas, and then let legitimate ones back on the approved list after they complained.

At the very least, Levine said, Verizon should be more forthright with its customers.

Sher agrees.

"They addressed a real problem by taking a sledgehammer rather than a scalpel," he said. "And they have too much invested in their system to change it."

## Red Hat Readies Major Linux Upgrade

Red Hat is likely to release a major upgrade to its enterprise operating system in the next two weeks, according to news reports. The software is expected to fully support the Linux 2.6 kernel for the first time.

The upgrade's launch will occur at the Linuxworld Conference & Expo, being held in Boston in early February.

Red Hat's last major upgrade to its operating system was in October 2003, when the company unveiled the product's third version.

Although Red Hat has not given specific details on the tweaks and overhauls made to Enterprise Linux 4.0, news reports have noted that probable changes include significant enhancements in a number of areas.

The most important of these is to the Linux 2.6 kernel, the operating system's core component.

Red Hat has included 2.6 kernel features in recent products, but has not had full support before. The achievement of this goal could be a milestone for the company and put it on a better footing to compete with Novell SuSE, which has been shipping the 2.6 kernel for over a year.

Due to a rewrite in Linux's subsystem, there will be improvements in data transfer between components on the computer. Also likely is a new version of the Logical Volume Manager hard drive partitioning software.

The subsystem enhancements will make Red Hat's servers faster during tasks like application running and information processing.

Security enhancements are also expected, which would be in line with Red Hat's growing emphasis on making its Linux products more bulletproof.

In the tradition of user conferences, like Apple's recent MacWorld gathering, Red Hat could have a string of announcements reserved for the occasion.

With Enterprise Linux 4.0 likely to become a reality and Red Hat's recent foray into China fresh in the news, the company is demonstrating its willingness to make a broad play in the market, YankeeGroup analyst Laura DiDio told NewsFactor.

"Red Hat is focusing on many different areas right now, and that could work well for them," she said, adding that the company will have to be aggressive to compete with rival Novell SuSE. "I think people are looking forward to these announcements, and that's a good sign, when users want to hear about what you're launching."

## Google Releases Photo Organizing Software

Search engine leader Google Inc. released free software Tuesday for organizing and finding the hundreds or thousands of digital photos often stored on a computer's hard drive.

Using technology developed by Picasa Inc., which Google bought last year, the new software will try to make keeping a photo collection and editing pictures simple even for beginners, said Lars Perkins, Picasa's general manager.

Rather than requiring users to import individual photos from their drives, the Picasa software automatically detects them as they are added - whether sent via e-mail or transferred from a digital camera.

Picasa tries to do away with complexities such as file names and folders. Photos are dumped into one bucket, sorted by date, but the software can quickly pull photos from date ranges or events as requested. In the new version, users will be able to mark the best pictures with a gold star and search only for those.

Picasa initially cost \$29 but became a free download after its acquisition by Google. Version 2 of Picasa will also be a free download.

The new software will have better tools for restoring color and removing red eyes.

New editing features include the ability to make the sky bluer; to blur the background and focus on a subject; or to rotate photographs slightly to compensate for any camera tilt. All changes can be reversed, and the software stores different versions without requiring users to perform a "save as" command and rename the file.

Captions are automatically attached to the photo file so that they go with the photo to Web sites and CDs.

Picasa is not Google's first venture onto the desktop. Though the company got its start as an Internet search engine, Google released in October a desktop search tool that automatically records e-mail, Web pages and chat conversations and finds Word, Excel and PowerPoint files stored on the computer.

Picasa 2 is available only for Windows computer and requires Microsoft Corp.'s Internet Explorer browser, version 5.01 or higher, or Mozilla Firefox.

#### Will Mac Minis Sway Windows Users?

Apple Computer's retail outlets will be critical in selling Mac Minis to Windows users, according to Needham & Co.

In a research note released to clients, analyst Charles Wolf postulates that with Apple "frequently described as a religion", the Apple Stores "have become the places of worship, succeeding brilliantly in spreading the gospel". And the introduction of the Mac Mini will help the stores in the task of, "attracting Windows users to the Mac platform and growing the Mac's market share", he writes.

IDC figures released Thursday showed Apple to be the fifth-place U.S. PC vendor, with worldwide unit shipments growing well in excess of the industry average in 2004, and a 0.1 percent rise in global marketshare, to 3.3 percent. Apple saw 25 percent growth in the quarter, in contrast to an industry average of 13.7 percent.

Since launch in May 2001, Apple Stores now deliver revenues of \$2.2 billion per year - 16 percent of Apple's worldwide sales, and 40 percent of Apple's U.S. retail sales.

The company had 101 stores open at the end of December, and plans to open 25 more this year, Wolf said, pointing out that sales per square foot are "more than five times higher" than typical mall-based stores.

However, despite the fact that 13 percent of Windows users will buy an iPod when they visit a store, just 1 percent of visitors bought a Mac.

"Sticker shock has been a major barrier to iPod-toting Windows users who've contemplated switching to a Mac. The Mac Mini, priced at \$500, 60 percent below the third-generation entry-level iMac, promises to change this," said Wolf.



He continued, "The Mac Mini has effectively eliminated price as a barrier to switching, although other costs remain, such as the purchase of Mac OS X software applications."

Wolf believes that Apple's ace card is iLife, which the company will be able to demonstrate running on Mac Minis inside its stores, which he describes as "the ideal venue for selling the machine".

Wolf expects Apple will come close to selling a Mac to one in ten iPod-owning Windows users, simply by using those stores to show Mac Minis and iLife to them.

#### Microsoft To Sell Outlook with Hotmail

Looking to cash in on the popularity of its Outlook e-mail offering, Microsoft will sell a version of the application to the company's massive Hotmail customer base.

Outlook Live is the first Microsoft Office product available by subscription, and is designed to let customers take their personal information data offline. It will initially be offered in the U.S., UK and Canada.

"This rounds out our subscription services and gives customers a choice in e-mail offerings," Karin Muskopf, MSN product manager, told NewsFactor. Outlook Live is targeted at "power e-mail users," she said, describing them as individuals who are familiar with the application and rely on the business-related functions as part of their jobs.

Offering the software as a download is a new approach, making Outlook available anywhere, Muskopf said, letting users do their work offline and then synch with Hotmail and MSN when they reconnect. "It's a collaboration between MSN and Outlook that could lead to other subscription services."

For US\$60 a year, Outlook Live customers get the latest version of Office Outlook 2003 for Subscription Services, 2 GB of online storage, the ability to send 20MB attachments, and e-mail spam and virus protection.

Hotmail, touted by Microsoft as the world's largest free Web-based e-mail service, has some 187 million users worldwide. The addition of Outlook Live gives those customers the opportunity to access multiple e-mail accounts and obtain a number of information management features, such as personal calendars and contact lists, and offline messaging synchronization.

"It makes a lot of sense to put Outlook and Hotmail together," said Forrester Research analyst Ted Schadler. "Hotmail is free, so any revenue they can get out of it helps the bottom line. They can't sell storage, since Google and others are offering that at no charge, but they have a great e-mail client in Outlook and being able to take that offline is attractive."

From the Outlook side, Schadler told NewsFactor, this proposal extends distribution of the application and paves the way for Microsoft to sell other services, such as Exchange or Office Professional, to the Hotmail audience.

Still, the price is pretty steep, he noted. "I'm not convinced that people

will pay \$60 a year for this version of Outlook. A fee of \$20 or \$30 is more reasonable, and Microsoft may have to reconsider the price if acceptance lags."

## Internet Explorer Use Still Falling, Firefox on the Rise

The Internet Explorer browser continues to lose market share, while open-source darling Firefox still is attracting users.

IE now commands around 90 percent of the market, according to Web analytics company WebSideStory, which puts the browser's share at 90.3 percent. Firefox now has a 5 percent slice.

Although Firefox's share might seem puny in comparison to IE, its rate of growth has been notable. Estimates put its current download rate at almost 20 million, and its companion e-mail client, Thunderbird, passed the 2 million download mark at the end of its first month of availability.

One of the main factors for Firefox's success has been word-of-mouth recommendations among users and a number of excellent reviews in the media.

In mid-December, the Mozilla Foundation, creator of Firefox, placed a two-page ad in the New York Times that raised the browser's visibility in the mass market.

The ad featured the names of thousands of people worldwide who contributed to the fundraising campaign to support the launch of the browser.

After the ad ran, German and Dutch Firefox supporters followed suit, funding ads in newspapers in those countries.

The ongoing popularity of Firefox is not surprising, said Niels Brinkman, co-founder of Dutch market research firm OneStat.com.

The firm also has reported that IE use is steadily falling, and Brinkman told NewsFactor that the decline is expected to continue.

"Firefox has gotten much attention over the past few months, and that has brought success," he said. "As more people use the browser and like it, they'll tell others, and the downloads will continue."

It is likely that IE use also is falling because of security concerns. Since it is the most-used browser, IE is a prime target for attackers.

Several vulnerabilities recently have been reported in IE 6.0, which prompted Microsoft to issue patches.

The company also has admonished some security researchers for unfairly characterizing IE as less secure than other browsers. However, calling reports "misleading and inaccurate" probably will not be enough for Microsoft to change public perception.

"People think of Firefox as more secure, and many of them switch to the browser for just that reason," said Brinkman.

## SCO Wins Legal Round Against IBM Over Linux Code

Shares in SCO Group Inc. rallied as much as 34 percent on Thursday after the small software company won a legal victory in its multibillion dollar lawsuit against IBM over computer software code used in Linux.

Shares in Lindon, Utah-based SCO were up 67 cents, or 19 percent, at \$4.20 in early afternoon Nasdaq trade after a federal judge in Salt Lake City ordered International Business Machines Corp. to turn over programming code to SCO's lawyers.

The software code in question is at the center of the lawsuit, which SCO filed in 2003 accusing the computer giant of violating its trade secrets by introducing part of its Unix source code, or software blueprint, into Linux - a freely available operating system.

Additionally, SCO is also trying to get users of Linux software to pay the company licensing fees under a program.

"SCO is pleased with the court's order and we look forward to obtaining this important discovery so we can continue with our preparation for trial," the company said in a statement. Executives from SCO were not available for comment.

The lawsuit is scheduled to go to trial in the fall.

Officials from IBM were not immediately available for comment.

SCO had filed a motion saying that IBM had failed to provide information material to the case, which SCO believes will show that IBM had taken proprietary Unix code and introduced it into Linux.

Judge Brooke Wells granted SCO a partial review of IBM's programming code and said that SCO could be given complete access in the future if IBM withholds any further data.

SCO has been posting losses due to ongoing legal fees in its lawsuit against IBM and other companies.

## Web Video Ads Seen Hot in '05, Pop-Ups Not

Online video will heat up as a U.S. advertising format in 2005, fueled by the use of high-speed Internet connections, while attention-grabbing pop-ups will wane, according to a report released on Thursday.

In a research report on online ad trends, Internet agency Avenue A/Razorfish predicted that advertisers will embrace Web video in 2005, building on the interest shown by consumers last year. Avenue A/Razorfish is the largest independent U.S. online agency, part of aQuantive Inc.

"I would not be surprised if every one of the Internet portals has video as one of their top two focuses in 2005," Jeff Lanctot, vice president of media at Avenue A/Razorfish, told Reuters. "I think they all see it long-term as a way to grow their business."

Industry analysts expect total Internet ad spending to surge between 20

percent and 40 percent this year to more than \$10 billion, including paid search listings and visual "display" ads.

That growth is already cheering top Internet companies who rely heavily on ad revenue. Yahoo Inc. reported this week a 67 percent jump in quarterly marketing services revenue.

Yahoo operates one of the largest Internet portals against rivals MSN, part of Microsoft Corp., and AOL, part of Time Warner Inc. MSN launched a free online video service last year, giving viewers access to short news and entertainment clips accompanied by advertisements.

"There is a huge opportunity for video-based programing on the Web," said Doug Knopper, senior vice president at marketing company DoubleClick. "We haven't figured out as an industry what the model is just yet...but the experimentation will be on the video side."

DoubleClick competes with aQuantive in serving up and tracking online ads.

Advertisers devote only a fraction of marketing budgets online, but they are accelerating that spending as consumers dedicate more time to the Internet, particularly as they research purchases.

Improved technology that creates ads and tracks consumer response has driven more companies to the Web. Internet portals are also drawing millions of viewers, traffic that is beginning to compete with traditional mass media such as television.

"Yahoo, AOL and MSN are like the old television networks and the home page is their hit show," said Lanctot.

Portals are commanding top prices for home page space, as much as \$400,000 for a 24-hour ad placement. Niche sites such as those catering to entertainment or travel have been able to raise their prices by as much as 40 percent, he said.

At the same time, consumer backlash against pop-up ads, which appear automatically when a Web site is opened, and increasing use of technology that blocks those ads will diminish that format considerably, according to Avenue A.

"While (pop-ups) have been an effective low-cost, high-volume vehicle, they are rapidly losing steam," the Avenue A report said. "Marketers who have been dependent on pop ads should be testing alternative formats and inventory."

==~==~==

Atari Online News, Etc. is a weekly publication covering the entire Atari community. Reprint permission is granted, unless otherwise noted at the beginning of any article, to Atari user groups and not for profit publications only under the following terms: articles must remain unedited and include the issue number and author at the top of each article reprinted. Other reprints granted upon approval of request. Send requests to: [dpj@atarinews.org](mailto:dpj@atarinews.org)

No issue of Atari Online News, Etc. may be included on any commercial media, nor uploaded or transmitted to any commercial online service or internet site, in whole or in part, by any agent or means, without the expressed consent or permission from the Publisher or Editor of Atari Online News, Etc.

Opinions presented herein are those of the individual authors and do not necessarily reflect those of the staff, or of the publishers. All material herein is believed to be accurate at the time of publishing.